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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP  
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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SUPPLEMENT

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COUNTRY

Italy/Syria/North Africa

SUBJECT

Italian Policy in the Near East and North Africa

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This document is hereby registered to  
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letter of 16 October 1973 from the  
Near East and North Africa to the  
Archivist of the United States.  
Next Review Date: 2008

1. Luigi Cortese, Italian Ambassador for Syria with his staff and his First Secretary, arrived 20 September.
  2. Cortese has already indicated that he will follow a course of complete collaboration with the Arabs and that he aims to accomplish penetration of Arab leadership extending throughout the Near East. In order to facilitate the execution of his plans he hopes eventually to be accredited as the Italian representative in Baghdad.
  3. Cortese is now reported to be in contact with a prominent Syrian journalist who has been in Rome recently and is one of the channels which Cortese expects will be most useful to his mission.
- 25X1A [REDACTED] Comment: Although it is not thought that Foreign Minister Sforza briefed Cortese on the mission, it is believed that Sforza is in complete agreement and has discussed the problem in detail with Cortese.)
4. On the subject of the Italian colonies in Africa Cortese has expressed the view (first expounded by Sforza himself in 1944) that if the exercise of Italian sovereignty in Africa interfered with the development of a policy of rapprochement with the Arab world, an Italian trusteeship would be the best solution.
  5. However, Cortese indicated that if Italy emerged with no colonies even under a trusteeship plan, an all-out policy of collaboration with the Arabs would be pursued. Under such circumstances, Italy would back Arab demands for independence in Libya although Cortese is aware that such a policy would seriously embarrass the French in Tunisia and the rest of North Africa.
  6. Cortese expects to get in touch with Abd El-Krim and Abd El-Kadar as soon as he takes over his post and has a chance to orient himself in the area.
- 25X1A [REDACTED] Comment: Cortese is a man of ability but without previous experience in Arab or Near Eastern affairs.)

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